

701 may be from 50 to 100; and the anonymous M.S. 46, p. 8, records
 291 that in a *wanyatta* there may be from 20 to 30 huts. The extension
 of the term is not clear. It may be applied alternatively to the whole
 group forming a *wanyatta*, and to a subdivision of this. Thus, we
 find in M.S. 48 that each *sirit* is said to have its own 'portion' of the
 [62] *wanyatta*. Similarly, Fox says that each *sirit* is commanded by a
 captain (*il sigwesan loe sirit*), and that the *wanyatta* is ruled by
 a special leader (*il sigwesan 'I of power* - the leader of the age-unit),
 who is at the same time the captain of his own *sirit*.¹²⁰

The fact that the members of the *sirit* "as a rule quarrel pretty
 regularly with other *sirit* of their *wanyatta*" is emphasized by M.S. 48,
 p. 3. There is no indication that the internal organization of the
wanyatta is based on the seniority of its members. We may, however,
 assume quite safely that that is the main principle which regulates
 the relationship of the *wanyatta*'s of the two age-units existing at
 the same period. No special information is available on this point,
 but it is obvious that members of the two age-units have their own
wanyatta's and we also know that they unite in time of war, the
 juniors being trained by the seniors.

Seemingly the *sirit* division has a military function and serves
 to readily organise warriors for raids. MEKKER,¹²¹ however, applies
 the term to a special partnership which two age-mates contract
 [52] on their way to the battle-field. They pledge themselves to assist
 each other while fighting. They refer to each other as 'my compa-
 nion' (*we sirit al*), and if one of them falls, the other has to rescue
 his arms.¹²² Ten or twelve such companions form a company.

527 The term *sirit* is further applied to the grouping of initiates
 561 who come together for a meat festival (*we sirit of bal*). This group
 consists according to MEKKER,¹²³ of five or six age-mates who go
 to a segregated place where they revel on ox-meat.

The meat festivals (*al bal*, pl. *e bal*) are held once or twice a month;

¹²⁰ Very probably this leader of the *wanyatta* is no other than the *sigwesan* *al* *homa* *orok*, as indicated. The two different expressions may be taken as describing two different functions exercised by the same person. *Sigwesan* *al* *homa* *orok* means lit. "the speaker with the black cloth", and *'I sigwesan* *'I of power*, "the speaker of the age-unit".

¹²¹ MEKKER, l. c., p. 71.

¹²² MEKKER, l. c., p. 23: "Die Aufgabe der Gefährten ist es, dem andern im Kampfe beizustehen und, wenn er fällt, seine Waffen in Sicherheit zu bringen". The *sirit* as a military company is also mentioned by MS 48.

¹²³ MEKKER, l. c., p. 24.

they last for three or four days and generally take place before a raid.¹²²

At this point it is relevant to discuss the relationship of military organisation and the age units. MERKEK¹²³ gives a description of Masai military organisation. He assumes the existence of a standing army (*das stehende Heer*), in which he distinguishes the recruits, the warriors and the reserve.

The recruits are "the shaved ones" (*el barot*).¹²⁴ These, together with "the warriors" (*el moros* = initiates)¹²⁵ constitute the peace-time force (*Friedenstärke*), under conscription.¹²⁶

The junior elders come into action in time of war but they may be reckoned as members of the standing army ("... kann man als Reserve ansehen und mit dem stehenden Heer rechnen..."). The senior elders take arms only in defense of their own territorial areas and sections (*Distrikt*).

The above description appears to be very formal.¹²⁷ It shows, however, that military activity is not confined to the initiates but extends to the classes of elders. And this is a relevant point. We can say, therefore, that the initiates become warriors not, to the exclusion of the other classes above them. A further point brought out by MERKEK's description is the distinction between an offensive army constituted by the so called recruits, the warriors and the reserve, and a defensive army in which the senior elders are also incorporated.

It would be of great interest to know how the organisation of a raid or any other military action is formed, and whether there is any relationship between such an organisation and the *wasapelle*

¹²² MERKEK, l. c., p. 94. See also HOLLIS, l. c., p. 217. At p. 221, n. 1, he states that "if pads are special places erected in the woods, to which the warriors retire when they slaughter cattle".

¹²³ MERKEK, l. c., p. 73.

¹²⁴ "The shaved ones", (*el barot*, pl. *el barot*), is the term applied to those who have just come out of their individual initiation and have been given the warriors' arms. They are the junior initiates.

¹²⁵ We may assume that the general term "warriors" as used by MERKEK at this place (see also p. 94) refers to the senior initiates.

¹²⁶ MERKEK, l. c., p. 73, regards conscription as a kind of compulsory membership (... *el moros* — *der allgemeine* — *Wahrschick ins Heer*...).

¹²⁷ One may note here that it is MERKEK's tendency to describe Masai customs in a way which fits his own scheme. As known, his thesis on the scientific origin of the Masai has so influenced his way as to make his information in many a case unreliable.

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332 villages the shields are removed to allow mating to take place with the owner's own cows. The same method of preventing mating is used with men, but to a much lesser extent. If a man has several good cows he keeps shields on a few of them at a time in order to use his cows in rotation.

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342 Blood-letting.—Among the Masai, blood is a staple article of diet. It is either drunk hot and fresh, or cooked with bits of fat and meat into a "black pudding," or else mixed with milk milk and allowed to curdle.

In order to obtain blood every sheep and every head of cattle is bled at intervals. Cattle are bled by one method and sheep by another. In the case of cattle, the animal is seized and held, and a thorn is then tied round its neck until the vein at the side of the neck swells up under the pressure of the blood. The vein is then punctured by means of a special instrument which may be termed a "blood-letting arrow." The blood-letting arrow consists of a small sturdy shaft into the end of which a small flat blade is inserted. This blade has a curved edge and is very sharp. This arrow is used with a special bow which is always small and usually very roughly made. The arrow is not shot from a distance, but placed against the swollen vein. The bow string is only pulled back very slightly and when released drives the arrow just far enough to open the vein. The blood is caught in a gourd and the animal released.

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[415] Sheep are bled by a different method; the animal is held and a small incision is made just above one eye and blood flows off.

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327 Meat-feasts.—Young men and old alike indulge in frequent meat feasts, meat being a staple article of diet. No man may eat meat inside the village, so meat feasts take place either in special huts built at a little distance from the village, or in a cave if there is one near by.

There are certain rules and regulations concerning meat feasts, as follows:—

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- (1) No man may eat meat that has been touched by a woman.
 - (2) No Masai man may slaughter cattle himself. In every case a man of the Wandachia tribe must be called in to kill the animal, and he must be rewarded by being given a part of a feeding.
 - (3) The neck, stomach and some of the intestines are always given to the women, who may come and look them. The breast must be given to the man to whom the slaughtered animal belonged.
 - (4) During a meat feast, some at least of the feasters must sleep in the hut or cave where the meat is, and it is vital for all to do so. If by any chance the fire should go right out in the middle of the night, it would be considered a very serious matter indeed. In such a case no one inside the hut may go out by the normal entrance, but must break through the walls (in the case of a cave they must break through the breastwork screen which is invariably built across part of the entrance to the mouth of the cave), and all the meat that is left over must be discarded and left to the hyenas. The breaking of this rule is said to result invariably in the death of the offender.

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The principal activity of the aj gnom consists in keeping the people of his district together and protecting them from splitting up, which could be more or less disastrous for the district. One reason for this is furnished by both the constant petty jealousies and feuds between the warriors of the various areas, who, for example, not infrequently plan two war expeditions at the same time, instead of concentrating on one, and the short-sighted selfishness of many old men, who are inclined, in the selection of new pasturing places, to think only of the quality of the pasture, instead of also considering whether the warriors are in a position to protect the desired place from hostile attacks. An enemy's success affects not only the one who loses all his property in connection with it, but is a disgrace for the whole people. In such cases the aj gnom asserts his authority. To one who does not obey him, the authority of the aj gnom is, as a rule, made clear by the action by means of a hearing. Besides this activity, the aj gnom, if necessary, acts as an intermediary between the people of his district and the aj alim, and sometimes his decision is requested in legal disputes, but since in this case he is guided very little by legal principles, but rather by political considerations, one cannot actually designate him as a judicial person. The conjecture that the aj gnom might have something to say in matters pertaining to the cult or might make magic amulets is obvious, but does not prove to be true.

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We have seen above that every two age classes form an association. If the members of this association have all been married a long time, the aj alim binds these two classes in that he betroths upon the two age classes, each of which -- which is to be said beforehand -- has its own name, a common name. This takes place at the aj buluk festival. For this all the men of the association gather near the aj alim and build a large heap in the vicinity of his village. Everyone brings honey for honey-making or a kind of curd for the food. The latter is then killed by fermentation, as at the aj gulle festival. The festival consists of the consumption of these things, whose climax is furnished by the declaration of the aj alim that these sacrificed honey-kills belong to one association (aj gulle), which only now actually exists and are to have a common association-name.

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121 According to this, the institution of the age classes together with the existence of the age grades, which were more sharply defined and made more prominent in their meaning by the former, seems so important for the maintenance of a constantly war-ready camp that the thought arises as to whether that institution did not first become formed out of a striving for such a band of warriors. The warriors' living together as a valuable impetus for comradeship and esprit de corps, in which lies a chief condition for success in war, leads further to military and then to free love: one can see as its equal the women's society that belongs to an age class. This in turn does in the first step for another right, of which, indeed, we also find remnants among the *Stecher*.

X.

000 Introduction of the youths to the warrior life. -- Their first war expedition. -- The *al* attend upon them the same for the age class. -- *Stecher* ornaments in individual constituent parts and their meaning. -- The youths become warriors.

121 As soon as the circumcision wound has healed, the circumcised exchange the long apron (*al* *gird*, *al* *girdle*) for the short skin-cape (*al* *girdle*). */H. margit*, again put on their ornaments, anoint their bodies with red paint and, after they have now more shaved their heads, cut out as *al* *horns* (sing. *al* *horn*), formed from *horns* a half-headed, armed with spear, club, sword, and shield, into the back to resemble the *al* *gird* [of *gird*]. Spear, shield, and sword are gifts from their fathers; they have carved the club themselves. As we shall learn later in connection with the warriors, they divide themselves into new-groups of five or six. In the forest they erect a house of theirs for themselves or even build small huts out of leaves. The festival consists of consuming large quantities of meat and nothing but meat! For this each participant furnishes a fat or obtained from his father, which must be plate-colored, black if possible.